

Books are a valuable personal possession, and so the desire grew to set a mark of ownership on these treasures. The interest of great artists was awakened and book-plates were created which have come down to us as masterpieces of lasting artistic value. There have been times when the owner of only a few books was eager to have the characteristic traits of his own personality reflected in the exlibris of his treasured books. In Germany of late years this pleasing custom has almost fallen into oblivion. The reason, perchance, may be sought on the one hand, in the decline of the German Nation after the Great War and the resulting confusion in the minds and spirits of men; on the other, in the stupendous rhythm of the revival of the nation to new strength, and in the rapid sequence of great happenings which left scant leisure for that calm serenity of mind necessary to grasp the fact that even small cultural treasures such as exlibris, contribute their share to the cultural will of the nation.

And so, in order to encourage painters and advertising artists to take up this work once again, a competition was arranged for the securing of exlibris for the books in the Libraries of the Chambers contained in the Reich Cultural Chamber. The result of this competition is highly interesting when viewed from two angles. The large number of competitors showed that artists are prepared to devote their talents to the production of exlibris. And again, the work sent in revealed the fact that young artists in particular no longer possess a proper understanding of the purpose



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